cation of skill of workers obtained through informal means have been taken.

(c) and (d) Labour costs are only one part of the inputs of a product and generally labour costs in India are considered to be lower than in Europe. Authenticated item wise data for comparing the costs of Indian products *viz a viz* European products are not available.

(e) Government has taken up the following schemes to enhance skill level of workers:

1. Upgradation of 100 existing ITI's for providing higher skilled labour force.
2. Establishment of New ITI's and strengthening/modernization of existing ITI's in the North Eastern States including Sikkim.
3. Modernization and strengthening of the Craftsmen Training Scheme in the State of J&K.
4. Test & certify the skill obtained by the labour force informally.

Companies not contributing towards EPF

†378. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of companies not contributing to Employees Provident Fund Organisation in the country was about 2000 as on November, 2004;

(b) if not, the facts in this regard and the extent of amount not contributed by the said date; and

(c) the number of public sectors and Non-Government sector companies separately and the steps taken by Government to recover the amount?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.